**Wright, Frank Lloyd**

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**I. Introduction**

Wright, Frank Lloyd (1867-1959), American architect, considered one of the greatest figures of 20th-century architecture. However, both the man and his work were controversial during his lifetime.

**II. Life**

Wright was born either in Richland Center, or in nearby Bear River, Wisconsin, and grew up largely under the tutelage of his mother, Anna, and his aunts and uncles on farmland near Spring Green, Wisconsin. His father, a musician, abandoned the family in 1885. Wright briefly studied engineering at the University of Wisconsin, displaying a knack for drawing, and in 1887 he moved to Chicago, Illinois. From 1888 to 1893 he worked as an assistant at the Chicago architectural firm of Adler and Sullivan, learning much before embarking on an independent architectural path in 1893.

Wright's life was marred by marital problems, and the scandals connected with them scared away many potential clients. He left his first wife, Catherine, and their six children in 1909, after 20 years of marriage, and went to Europe with Mamah Cheney, the wife of a client. Still married to Catherine, he returned to Spring Green in 1911 with Cheney. There, he built a home and studio that he called Taliesin after a Welsh word meaning “shining brow,” a reference to the building's situation, clinging to the brow of a hill. Tragedy struck in 1914, when a servant at Taliesin murdered Cheney, her two children, and four other people, and set the house on fire. Wright began rebuilding Taliesin soon afterward.

After Catherine granted him a divorce in 1922, Wright married Miriam Noel, an emotionally unstable woman from whom he soon separated. In 1927 he obtained a divorce from Miriam. Only with his third wife, Olgivanna Milanoff, whom he married in 1927, did he find the restful environment he needed to foster his creativity. Wright and Olgivanna lived at a rebuilt Taliesin, which became his studio and a center for training apprentices in his architectural principles. Those who came to study with Wright at Taliesin also helped farm the land. In the mid-1930s Wright built Taliesin West in Scottsdale, Arizona, and from then on, the studio and apprentices moved to Arizona for the winter.

Wright also supported himself by lecturing and writing. Among his writings are An Autobiography (1932, revised 1943) and The Future of Architecture (1953), a collection of his articles from the 1930s.

**III. Work**

Wright avoided anything that might be called a personal style. Through all his designs, he was guided by principles that he termed organic architecture. By this he meant that every building should relate harmoniously to its natural surroundings and that a building should not be a static, boxlike enclosure but a dynamic structure, with open, flowing interior spaces. To achieve this organic design, he used geometric units, or modules, that generated a grid. The first modules were squares, but Wright later used diamonds, hexagons, and other geometric shapes, upon which he laid a free-flowing floor plan. Another device Wright favored was the cantilever-a long projection (often a balcony) that was supported at only one end. The grid and the cantilever freed Wright's designs from being merely boxes with openings cut into them.

**A. Prairie Houses**

Experimenting in many styles during the 1890s, Wright proved his mastery of the architectural ideas of the time. Instead of pursuing those ideas, however, he chose to use his principles of organic architecture to develop the prairie house-a long, low structure that hugged the Midwest prairie. A shallow roof emphasized its horizontal lines. Wright disliked basements, and beginning with the William Winslow house (1893) in River Forest, Illinois, his earliest independent commission, his buildings were set firmly on the earth, rather than in it.

The first prairie house, the Ward Willits residence (1901) in Highland Park, Illinois, followed a cruciform (cross) plan based on a grid of 39-in (99-cm) squares. A fireplace facing into the living room is at its center or core. The entry forms one arm of the cross. Opposite it is the dining room. The living room projects to one side, the kitchen and servants' quarters to the other. The cross, or a variation of it, was Wright's favorite plan of this period.

In the Willits residence Wright established basic spatial principles he would follow in his prairie houses and his later designs. At the approach to the house, Wright reduced space by using an overhanging roof, side walls, and stairs that bring the person entering closer to the roof. All this compression sets the stage for a dramatic explosion of space as one finally turns into the living room. Wright's living rooms typically have a height of one-and-a-half or two stories, but they seem much larger because of the compression experienced before entering them. Wright also designed the furnishings of many of his houses, or he had other designers create them to his detailed specifications.

In 1908 Wright designed a smaller prairie house, in River Forest, Illinois, for Isabel Roberts, his office bookkeeper and the daughter of an earlier client. Modest in price, it was America's first split-level house, with bedrooms a half story up from the living room and the kitchen a half story down.

The crowning achievement of Wright's prairie architecture is the Frederick C. Robie house (1906-1909) on Chicago's South Side. This long, three-story structure stands no taller than the surrounding two-story houses. A roof cantilever extends 6.4 m (21 ft) from the western wall of the house over a west-facing veranda. On the south facade, 14 glass doors open onto a main-floor balcony, which shades the 10 windows and 4 doors on the ground floor below. A shallow roof overhang enables sunlight to enter through the main-floor doors in winter but keeps sunlight out in the hot summer months. At noon in midsummer, sunlight just reaches the foot of the glass doors, thereby leaving the interior in shade. This design for a hot summer climate exemplifies the architect's sensitivity to the environment.

**B. Work in Japan and California**

From the beginning Wright's goal had been to create a democratic American architecture, providing designs for houses that middle-class families could afford. However, most of his prairie houses were built for wealthy clients. When he failed to achieve his goal, Wright abandoned America, prairie architecture, and his first wife and went to Europe. There he produced the Wasmuth portfolio (1911), a publication of drawings of his work; in many cases Wright altered these drawings to make them appear more beautiful. His fame grew as a result of this publication, and in 1913 Wright received a commission for a huge hotel in Japan. The design and construction of this hotel, the Imperial Hotel in Tokyo, kept him busy from 1915 to 1922. Built of reinforced concrete, it was one of only a handful of buildings in Tokyo to survive intact a severe earthquake in 1923.

On his trips to Japan, Wright frequently stopped in California, and in the early 1920s he joined his architect son Lloyd Wright in southern California. There he designed four houses built of patterned concrete blocks. Steel reinforcing rods knit the blocks together to form walls in what Wright called a textile block system.

**C. Usonian Houses**

Wright achieved his goal of low-cost, democratic American architecture with his Usonian houses of the 1930s. Usonia was Wright's term for the United States of North America, with an i added for a pleasing sound. The Usonian house had a simple design, usually with an L-shaped floor plan. This plan separated the noisier living space on one leg of the L from the quieter bedroom space on the other leg. The floor was made of concrete slabs, typically in a square grid of 4 by 4 ft (1.2 by 1.2 m) for easy construction. Pipes carrying heated water ran beneath the floor and provided radiant heat. The kitchen, which Wright called the workspace, and two supporting walls at each end of the house were of masonry (brick or stone). Long wood panels, emphasizing the structure's horizontality, were used for both interior and exterior walls. Glass window walls on the inside of the L opened onto the yard, while the wooden outside of the L closed the house off from the street.

The first Usonian house to be built was the Herbert Jacobs house (1936) in Madison, Wisconsin. Wright created more than 50 such houses, sometimes varying the L plan or using equilateral triangles, diamonds, or circular segments as the module for the grid. In the 1950s Wright substituted masonry for wood on the exterior, at first using blocks and then reintroducing the textile block system he pioneered in California. The masonry blocks for the system were 16 in (41 cm) wide and could be made by the client to reduce the cost.

**D. Fallingwater and Other Late Works**

Ironically, the work for which Wright is best known is one of his largest and least democratic works: Fallingwater, built in 1936 for Pittsburgh department store magnate Edgar Kaufmann. Cantilevered dramatically over a waterfall in southwest Pennsylvania, Fallingwater is notable for its relationship with the environment-it appears to emerge from the rocks above the waterfall-and for bringing the outdoors inside. Not only does the waterfall become part of the house-a staircase in the living room leads down to it-but the wooded glen that surrounds the house is visible from every room. Concrete balconies cantilever at right angles from the house's vertical stone core, and a balcony off the main living space extends over the waterfall.

Another major commission of the 1930s came from Herbert F. Johnson, president of the Johnson Wax Company in Racine, Wisconsin. It included the company's Administration Building (1936) and Wingspread (1937), an elegant house for Johnson that has four wings arranged in a pinwheel pattern around a central core. The roof of the Administration Building's main workroom appears to float above a forest of tall, tapered columns with broad, flat tops. Light enters through skylights and long bands of glass tubing.

Aside from Fallingwater, the building for which Wright is most remembered is the Guggenheim Museum (1957-1959) in New York City. Its spiraling ramp provides a dramatic setting for art, although critics have questioned the ramp's suitability as an exhibition space.

Wright's innovative designs and use of materials often drew controversy. Builders doubted whether his cantilevers-especially at Fallingwater-would support their weight. Others questioned the practicality of his designs, such as that for the Guggenheim. Wright's legacy consists of more than 1,000 designs, nearly half of which were built. He continued working until his death, two months before his 92nd birthday. Architects worldwide now employ grid systems as well as the open type of floor plan he pioneered. The originality of Wright's designs, his sensitivity to a building's surroundings, and his creative use of materials-especially concrete and cement blocks-have been widely recognized. A number of his buildings are considered national landmarks.

**Список литературы**

Donald Hoffman, Frank Wright’s Falling Water;Donald Hoffman Robie House.